



# North Slope Management Plan Planning Update No. 1

June 2015



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## Overview

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) initiated a planning process for the development of the North Slope Management Plan earlier this year. This plan encompasses approximately 12 million acres of land and water in the area of Prudhoe Bay south to the Chandalar area and includes the submerged lands to the 3 mile nautical limit from the Canadian border to Icy Cape. DNR announced the initiation of the plan process, including a public scoping and comment period, through posting an on-line notice on the Departments website and a letter that was distributed via mail or email. DNR developed a project specific website where people can review project related information, submit comments electronically, or subscribe to a contact list.

In addition to the online notice and the project website, DNR conducted meetings in several communities on the North Slope, Anchorage and Fairbanks as part of the official scoping and comment period. Meetings were held in Barrow, Anchorage, Anaktuvuk Pass, Kaktovik, Nuiqsut, Wiseman/Coldfoot, and Fairbanks. The purpose of these meetings was to solicit public input on use, resources, and issues within the NSMP, both now and into the future. These meetings allowed people to meet agency staff, ask questions about the planning process, review and comment on plan related resource and infrastructure information, and provide input on the issues that should or could be addressed in the plan. Each meeting followed an open house format and began with an informal presentation; followed by staff introductions; map review; and open discussion.

The public scoping period allows the public to submit comments that will be considered by DNR in the development of the plan. The official comment period is open through **July 31, 2015**. This planning update summarizes the discussions agency staff were engaged in or discussed at the scoping meetings.

## The Meetings: “What we heard”

Much of the discussion was focused on state lands and waters within the planning area; however, some people discussed issues affecting private or adjacent lands outside of the purview of this planning effort. Some discussions were specific to an issue and/or use within the NSMP, while others were more general in nature. Generally, issues identified at the meetings can be grouped into a few categories including:

- Access
- Commercial Operations
- Climate Change
- Facilities
- Habitat
- Infrastructure
- Materials

- Municipal Entitlement
- Noticing
- Oil and Gas Development
- Recreation
- Subsistence

A comprehensive summary of discussions and issues that were voiced during scoping meetings is available for download at: [http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/mgtplans/nsmp/pdf/nsmp\\_scoping\\_what\\_we\\_heard6-2015.pdf](http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/mgtplans/nsmp/pdf/nsmp_scoping_what_we_heard6-2015.pdf)

### **What happens next?**

The Department will continue to gather information provided from the public, non-governmental agencies, Alaska Native corporations, private industry, and other local, state, and federal agencies. DNR will analyze this data and use it in developing an Agency Review Draft of the North Slope Management Plan. This draft will take several months to complete, due to the large geographical area and the complex nature of the current land uses and resources within the North Slope planning area. The purpose of the agency draft is to receive internal feedback, as to the overall management direction proposed in the plan, and address any internal issues and/or concerns early in the process.

Following the agency draft, DNR will produce a Public Review Draft (PRD) of the plan document which will be released to the public for review and comment for a minimum of 30 days. DNR typically holds public meetings in communities concurrent with the public comment period. After the close of the PRD comment period, DNR will review comments and consider the issues identified in those comments; and, determine how to resolve the issues. The Department will develop an Issue Response Summary (IRS) that identifies substantive issues raised in comments and documents how the agency addressed the issues. Additionally, DNR develops a Recommended Revisions Document that incorporates all changes to the plan text identified in the IRS. In a typical planning process, the PRD - as modified by the recommended revisions – is forwarded to the Commissioner of DNR for review and adoption.

### **How do I become involved in the process?**

There is time for you to become involved in the planning process for the NSMP. **You are encouraged to:**

- Familiarize yourself with the information provided on the state website for the NSMP web address: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/mgtplans/nsmp/>;
- Submit general comments during the scoping period by **July 31, 2015** at the NSMP website or mail them to the address provided below;
- Subscribe to the mailing list to receive updated information;
- Attend any future public meetings; and,
- Review information, maps and draft planning documents provided for public review.

### **For information related to the planning process please contact:**

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**Visit the NSMP website at: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/mgtplans/nsmp/> to submit comments and get information on planning, management, and upcoming events.**